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Studying social capital in situ

A qualitative approach

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Studying social capital *in situ*. A qualitative approach

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Abstract: In recent years, the concept of social capital – broadly defined as co-operative networks based on regular, personal contact and trust – has been widely applied within cross-disciplinary human science research, primarily by economists, political scientists and sociologists. In this article, I will argue why and how fieldwork anthropologists should fill out a gap in the social capital literature by highlighting how social capital is being built *in situ*. I suggest that the recent inventions of ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’ social capital, e.g. inclusive and exclusive types of social capital, are fruitful concepts to apply in an anthropological fieldwork setting. Thus, my case study on the relationship between local people and newcomers in the rural Danish marginal municipality of Ravnsborg seeks to reveal processes of bridging/bonding social capital building. Such a case study at the micro level has general policy implications for a cultural clash between two different groups by demonstrating the complexity of a social capital mix where bonding social capital strongly prevails. This ultimately leads to a ‘social trap’ (Rothstein 2005), implying widespread distrust and serious social and economic costs for a whole population.

1. Introduction

The 'wrong' newcomers

In spring 2003 I made a fieldwork study in the Danish municipality of Ravnsborg in the Northwest of the island Lolland – a marginal rural area which is situated 150 kilometers Southwest of the Danish capital of Copenhagen. Here, the population has experienced a steady decline during the last 35 years. In this and many other respects Ravnsborg can be seen as a dying region, desperately in need of workplaces, people and economic capital. The study involved interviews with 70 citizens, as well as participant observation. On the one hand, it describes an interesting case of symbolic violence, widespread distrust and lack of co-operation between two groups – elderly locals and young newcomers. This mainly due to cultural and socio-economic differences. On the other hand, it explores the various costs of such fragmentation of local social capital, i.e. what has recently been termed formation of excessive *bonding* social capital involving exclusion strategies. This in contrast to formation of prevaillingly beneficial, *bridging* social capital based on inter-group trust, cooperation and inclusion strategies, which also can be detected in the municipality, however to a much lesser extent. (Putnam 2000; Svendsen and Svendsen 2004).

Right from the beginning, it was the wish of the municipal committee that I should describe and explain conflicts between young, unemployed people migrated from the island of Zealand – where Copenhagen is situated – and the native rural population. Such migration is often termed 'social location' (*social bosætning*). Here 'social' refers to a supposedly conscious strategy followed by these so-called 'social nomads' on public incomes, implying an unscrupulous maximization of these public incomes and, thus, abuse of the Danish welfare redistribution system.

In Ravnsborg Municipality, these conflicts have escalated during the last two decades. E.g. this is expressed in neighbor conflicts, and insinuations and accusations directed against criminal and/or lazy, in-migrated Zealanders – 'the Copenhageners' – in the local and regional press. Moreover, in an initial interview the municipal mayor expressed to me the hope that my fieldwork study would be able to *scientifically* document a widespread feeling among locals that it is primarily the newcomers (read: the 'Copenhageners'), who, equipped with another mentality than the local people, are guilty in the bad economy of the municipality. Similarly, at a municipal committee meeting I attended in the beginning of my stay in Ravnsborg one of the local politicians told me about the unwanted newcomers. When I remarked that these newcomers might be better than no newcomers at all, she quickly added: "Yes, but it's still a pity that we get the *wrong* newcomers".

In fact, the municipal committee has tried to document the economic burden caused by the Copenhageners by keeping their own account of the yearly number of newcomers, where they come from, and their occupational status. Thus, in 2002 a little more than hundred persons from Zealand – and here, mainly, the Copenhagen area – were registered. Half of them were on public incomes, which to a great extent are paid by Ravnsborg Municipality. Not surprisingly, the mayor was deeply concerned about

this development and, as mentioned, it was his hope that my report (Svendson 2003) would point out the cause of the bad economic performance of the municipality (the newcomers) and, thusly, give him a strong argument for more governmental funding to Ravensborg Municipality.

Studying inter-group conflicts

Right from the start, I was amazed by the negative and almost aggressive way the two groups spoke about each other, not least the locals when talking about the so-called 'Copenhageners'. However, when I asked a local, if he or she actually *knew* the Copenhageners, the most frequent answer was: No, but I've *heard* about them. Gradually, I found out that here was an interesting case of widespread distrust with direct impact on practice, reproduced by discourses rich of stereotypes and prejudices *combined* with a lack of regular personal contact between the two groups. In many ways the case appeared similar to many classical anthropological studies of anomaly, including symbolic as well as violent struggles between various ethnic, religious and political groups, such as Banfield's (1959) study of 'amoral familism' in a community in Southern Italy ruled by fear of the Mafia; Victor Turner's study of Ndembu (1957) in the context of rumors, 'social dramas' and violence; Kapferer's (1988) and Tambiah's (1996) studies of nationalist motivated violence in Sri Lanka and Asia; and Varshney's (2002) study of violence between Hindus and Muslims in India, enforced by lack of regular face-to-face interaction.

Before going into the field, I set myself the task to simply describe networks in the municipality, by use of a detailed interview guide. That is, essentially, questions aimed to shed light on who interacted with whom, how and why. Due to the already mentioned municipal context, I was particularly interested in inclusion/exclusion strategies among Ravensborg citizens. However, during my fieldwork I became increasingly aware of evident *costs* stemming from two groups (locals and newcomers) fighting each other to a much greater extent than I had ever imagined possible beforehand. That is, individuals' (newcomers') social costs on the one hand, and collective (municipal) economic costs on the other. I tried to 'measure' these individual and collective costs, as well as possible causes for this deep-going, culturally conditioned antagonism, which I – a Dane myself – had formerly only experienced between groups of Danes and ethnic immigrant groups. This 'measurement' should be undertaken via qualitative, *not* quantitative, methodology, implying long, loosely structured interviews with representatives from both groups. In my opinion, such an approach has been neglected in a social capital research agenda, which has been dominated by economists and political scientists during the last decade, not seldom under the aegis of The World Bank (e.g. Dasgupta and Serageldin 2000; Sobel 2002). At a more overall level, a micro level study like the present – focusing on an *actual in situ* building of types of social capital, inseparably related to concrete discourses, social classifications and identities in specific time-space contexts – has important implications for integration policies in Denmark and elsewhere, i.e. integration of social as well as ethnic groups. This by bringing into the debate, and partly providing solutions to, how the potential resource of bonding social

capital based on particularized trust in isolated networks can be transformed into bridging social capital based on generalized trust and open networks, beneficial to the *whole* society (cf. Putnam 2000; Uslaner 2002; Nannestad, Svendsen and Svendsen 2005). As such, the paper seeks to highlight what Bo Rothstein (2005) in a forthcoming book terms a *social trap*, that is, “a situation where individuals, groups or organizations are unable to cooperate owing to mutual distrust and lack of social capital, even where cooperation would benefit all”.

Structure

Section Two treats methodological issues, while Section Three first describes a dying rural region, next the paradox that many (old) locals would be happy to get rid of (young) migrants, who contribute to rejuvenate an ageing population. Section Four discusses the bridging/bonding approach within the overall framework of a new socio-economics termed ‘Bourdiesian economics’, alternately ‘Bourdieuconomics’. Section Five analyzes bridging/bonding formation in Ravnsborg, while Section Six is a conclusion.

2. Methodological issues

In search for a qualitative social capital approach

Arguably, network structures involve both collective goods and evils. Then how do we apply the social capital approach in anthropological studies of disintegration, distrust and ‘social traps’? Here we must be aware of two important, sociological corrections to previous works on social capital: First, that social capital is unequally distributed among social groups in specific power contexts; second, that various types of social capital exist. This implies a critique of the so-called “celebratory view of social capital” (Portes og Landolt 1996: 21) and a calling attention to the “downside” of social capital (ibid.). Consequently, Alejandro Portes (1998) has introduced a distinction between positive and negative social capital, where positive social capital is associated with rule enforcement, bounded solidarity and enforceable trust, and negative social capital with isolated networks that exceedingly limit members’ freedom of action at the micro level and have a negative effect on society as a whole, at the macro level.

We may suppose that it is partly in response to such critiques Putnam has started to apply a bridging/bonding typology, however not in a strictly systematic way. Thus, in *Bowling Alone* (2000) he defines ‘bridging’ social capital as open networks that are “outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages” (op.cit.: 22), while ‘bonding’ social capital consists of “inward looking [networks that] tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups” (ibid.). However, Putnam has largely applied statistics and, almost exclusively, focused on the sunny side of social capital. In my view sociological and anthropological studies, using qualitative methodology, are well suited to explore the sunny *as well as* the more shadowy side of

social capital. Such findings at micro levels can help to highlight, and interact with, key results at meso and macro levels.

In fact, some qualitative social capital studies have already been made (e.g. Krishna 2002; Svendsen and Svendsen 2004), and largely responding to Portes' critique. However, a bridging/bonding approach taking the two sides of social capital into account has not yet been fully developed.

Qualitative interviews

My fieldwork consists of 70 interviews with Ravnsborg citizens in April and May 2003. Out of the 70 interviews, 40 interviews were undertaken with selected interviewees belonging to two main target groups, newcomers and locals. These interviews, which form the backbone of the investigation, consist of loosely structured (taped) interviews lasting from minimum 1 to maximum 3 hours. Of the 24 interviewees belonging to the group of newcomers, 15 were 'Copenhageners' living on public transfer incomes. Of the 18 interviewees who categorized themselves as locals, 15 were public employees (municipal officers, politicians, employment consultants, social workers, a doctor etc.). The predominance of public employees, who *all* categorized themselves as local people, is due to the fact that these people have most contact with the Copenhageners – something I discovered during the first interviews. In general, ordinary local people simply didn't know the newcomers. Hence interviewing them only seemed to invoke a number of stereotypic and, at times, almost mythological statements ('The Copenhageners are alcoholics', 'They are not like us', 'They have a different mentality', etc.).

In order to avoid over-representation problems, I also undertook 30 short and prevailingly unstructured, informal interviews/chats with arbitrarily chosen Ravnsborg citizens – locals as well as newcomers. The purpose was to let these interviewees act as a control group. Examples are a coincidental talk with a local farmer, a shopkeeper, a Copenhagener charwoman, a local sexton, a teenager, the newly in-migrated, young director of the camping site where I was staying, a local gardener spontaneously starting to lament the 'invasion' of Copenhageners in her village on my telling her about my research project, and so on. I met them accidentally (however consciously seeking an occasion to chat with them), and these interviews can therefore be termed fully arbitrary 'raids' or 'down-strokes' among the population in Ravnsborg. Normally, I took my notes *after* such conversations, in order to keep the interviews as informal as possible.

Overall, I used an inductive and highly explorative method (Kvale 1996, Bernard 1998, Munck and Sobo 1998). This allowed me to become regularly surprised by empirical results and, accordingly, modify the bridging/bonding social capital framework I beforehand had considered the appropriate conceptual tool for such a study. More specifically, my method was based on a mix of conversation and embedded questions. As such, it can be termed informal interviews, if we are to follow the definition of David M. Fetterman:

”Informal interviews should be user friendly. In other words, they should be transparent to the participant after a short period of time. An informal interview is different from a conversation, but it typically merges with one, forming a mixture of conversation and embedded questions. The questions typically emerge from the conversation. In some cases, they are serendipitous and result from comments by the participant. In most cases, the ethnographer has a series of questions to ask the participant and will wait for the most appropriate time to ask them during the conversation (if possible)” (Fetterman 1989: 49).

Thus, trying to establish a relationship of mutual trust, I always began by asking quite neutral and non-threatening questions.¹ Then, in the course of the interview, whenever one of my key target subjects were touched upon by the informant in question, I begged him or her to explain further by asking short questions such as “What do you mean by that?”, “Please explain more about that”, “Could you describe this?” or, as I always preferred if the interview situation allowed it, simply “Why?” and “How?”, in order to steadily push the person to go further along that specific vein. In many ways, such an interview technique is similar to what H. Russel Bernard (and many others) have termed the unstructured interview:

“Unstructured interviews are based on a clear plan that you [the fieldworker] keep constantly in mind, but are also characterized by a minimum of control over the informant’s responses. The idea is to get people to open up and let them express themselves in their own terms, and at their own pace” (Bernhard 1998: 209).

However, in contrast to the unstructured interview described by Bernhard, my intention was to ‘enclose’ the interviewee into a limited space of conversation, where the person to a large extent was free to express herself. This simply by showing interest and keeping on asking questions, thus continuously encouraging the person to go on with that particular subject. More precisely, the interview technique I used – urging the person to highlight certain subject areas when the opportunity arose – can be termed as a *combination* of what Bernard defines as the unstructured and the semi-structured interview. According to Bernard, the semi-structured interview must be regarded as a more formal interview form which – though containing some elements of the flexibility from the unstructured interview – clearly is guided by an interview guide prepared by the fieldworker beforehand (ibid.).

In the survey, the embedded questions are directed towards seven target subjects: 1) Background 2) Networks 3) The first month 4) Newcomers versus locals 5) The role of municipal employees 6) Associational life, and 7) The future (for details, see Appendix 1). These key issues normally formed a chronological sequence, although interviewees were allowed to choose another order. Both newcomers and locals were asked about all seven subjects (except for subject number 3, How did you experience your first month in Ravnsborg?, which was addressed to newcomers only). This was done to enable comparative studies. If interviewees did not touch upon some of the subjects themselves, I explicitly asked them about the missing subjects at the end of the interview. In line with Bernard’s ideas on the unstructured interview, my clear intention was to allow the interviewed person to speak as freely as possible, ensuring that issues

meaning most to that person were highlighted. This in order to safeguard the inductive approach of the whole fieldwork study by reducing manipulation of interviewees as much as possible, so not to destroy empirical data.² However, if interviewees explicitly asked me about my background, the project, my theoretical approach or something else, I would freely tell them – however as shortly as possible and, preferably, at the end of the interview.

Due to my overall social capital approach (involving a special focus on network building), the seven target subjects listed above were of course not arbitrarily chosen. However, I did not fully choose them either. Thus, during the first week of my fieldwork I discovered, through interviewing, that these subject areas were of a particular importance for the people in Ravnsborg. Obviously, these were the subject areas that contained most significance for people when discussing the newcomers. Consequently, the seven key areas of investigation quickly replaced – bottom-up so to speak – a more complex and extensive interview guide I had prepared beforehand.

Finally, my fieldwork included participant observation. Among other things, I attended various social and cultural events, town hall decision-making and fairs where participants from the whole of Lolland were present.

The overall methodological aim of interviewing different actors within the same subject areas was to apply a holistic approach enabling me to get a broad picture of how newcomers are integrated, or *not* integrated, in the municipality. Are they – grossly speaking – active in building bridging social capital, or are they isolated individuals, or ‘bonded’ families and networks without contact with the rest of the population?

3. The problem

As mentioned, my quest started as a simple network mapping study, which gradually transformed into what can best be termed a social policy study focusing on ‘social trap’ mechanisms. We shall now take a closer look at the background leading to such prevailingly bonding social capital.

A dying region

Rural poverty and rural social exclusion are important issues in contemporary rural sociological studies (for overviews, see Meert 2000; Shucksmith 2004). On the one hand, research shows how a significant number of local people become gradually impoverished, or simply crowded out of the rural communities by rich newcomers immigrated from urban areas – as has been the case in e.g. Great Britain (Shucksmith 2003, 2004). On the other hand, there are examples of poor urban dwellers migrating to urban centers, as in the case of China (Garcia 2004). However, a completely new trend can be seen in Denmark these years, in the form of an urban proletariat migrating to marginal rural areas in search for cheap housing and, generally, a less expensive living (Danish Ministry of Interior 2004). This has caused severe conflicts between these urban

thinking people, who are often unemployed and live on public transfer incomes, and groups of agrarian thinking locals.

The arrival of a new, economically dependent social group involves both a potential human resource and an economic threat for the receiving rural municipalities. This is indeed the case for the municipality of Ravnsborg. Since 1970, the population has dropped by roughly one-third (from 8.000 to 5.600). Yet many of the interviewed local people are annoyed that so many newcomers relying on public support have incidentally chosen "*the most beautiful municipality in Denmark*", as the mayor of Ravnsborg municipality put it, in overt frustration (see Appendix 2 for an overview). However, the question I asked the mayor and many others, was: But *if* these people did not choose Ravnsborg municipality, what would happen then? The answer is that the number of people moving to Danish outskirt municipalities has significantly declined in recent years, not least on Lolland. Thus, the most probable scenario would be that *no one else* would come! As such, *all* newcomers – the 'right' as well as the 'wrong' – should in principle be seen as a possibility, i.e. a human resource securing local consumers, local life etc., and forming an until now not fully exploited work reserve. The question is, of course, how the newcomers can be integrated and their resources activated to the benefit of local wealth and development.

At the same time, it is evident that newcomers relying on social security services have worsened the economy of a stagnating or, maybe even, dying region. Thus, in August 2003 the budget deficits reached 6 million DDK due to unexpected social expenses, primarily to newcomers – a considerable amount for a poor municipality like Ravnsborg. These expenses include not only the public income transfers, but also administration and social regulations, e.g. preventive detention of children outside their homes. In this strict economic sense, the politician talking about the 'wrong' newcomers was clearly right, because highly educated and better off newcomers supporting rather than weakening the tax base are, of course, a better solution for the locals.

One way of trying to stop the immigration of costly social clients has been to demolish about 100 old and cheap buildings that were possible attractive homes for these unwanted newcomers. Moreover, in an attempt to attract more wealthy people with good jobs, Ravnsborg has tried to beautify the area, for example by renewing old villages, or by preservation of rural amenities. Add to this that the municipality is burdened by the general economic stagnation within the private sector, a low birth rate and a demographic structure with many retired people staying in the area, whereas the young people leave the region. In total, the result has been severe budget deficits and a low public service level in spite of the fact that Ravnsborg has one of the highest municipal taxation rates in Denmark.

At the plus side, we find a rich cultural life in Ravnsborg, mainly within the more than 60 registered voluntary associations. About two-thirds of these associations belong to sports. In addition to this, civic, residents' and pensioners' associations dominate (Lokalbogen 2003 for Lolland: 25). Cultural life also includes concerts, local theatre, art exhibitions and annual cultural events such as a jazz festival and a fair. This does not

wipe out the picture of a declining region burdened with serious demographic and economic problems, but – it may be hypothesized – with a potential solution in the new in-migrants. As we shall see in the following, integrating these people is however not an easy task.

Classification struggles: Stereotypes, social markers and rumors

The interviews show that many local residents recognize that the newcomers, including the ‘Copenhageners’, are valuable for Ravnsborg. They simply form a safeguard against depopulation. For example, a local farmer living in a relatively depopulated part of the municipality told that in their row there are five houses left, one of them being a summer residence. And he continued:

“If they demolished two [of the houses], there would only be three houses left. Then what about property taxes and renewing the asphalt, and what about the local trade? To begin with, there are social expenses and problems with children [associated with the newcomers]. But what is the alternative? Once the house has been demolished, you don’t build a new one. And if there is only one house on each road, then we all know in what direction the wind blows.”

This and similar statements show that in a rural marginal area such as Ravnsborg, people are getting increasingly dependent on each other. Thus one would expect the Ravnsborg citizens to resign from old group cleavages, start trusting each other and, in sum, build bridging forms of social capital. Nevertheless, the opposite seems to happen. Why? Here, the interviews point at a socio-cultural gap between locals and Copenhageners as the main cause, reinforced – and certainly also reproduced – by stereotypic representations of the other, prejudices, rumors and visible social markers. This reflects what Bourdieu (1991) terms ‘labour of representation’, i.e. an endeavor to represent a unified community sharing the same symbols and practices, in opposition to other (competing) communities. “Politics is”, Bourdieu says, “essentially, a matter of words” (Bourdieu 1990: 54). Consequently, groups and group identities can be seen as the outcome of words, acting as “the instruments of the struggle for the definition of reality” (Bourdieu 1977: 170), and leading to *classification struggles*:

Principles of division . . . function within and for the purposes of the struggle between social groups; in producing concepts, they produce groups, the very groups which produce the principles and the groups against which they are produced. What is at stake in the struggles about the meaning of the social world is power over the classificatory schemes and systems which are the bases of the representations of the groups and therefore of their mobilization and demobilization: the evocative power of an utterance which puts things in a different light. (Bourdieu 1989: 479)

Anthropological literature is rich on such ‘symbolic’ or ‘classificatory’ struggles between various groups. Recent, interesting examples are Roger Keesing’s (1992) book on Kwaio of Malaita, Solomon Islands, who built up a cultural identity after World War II by use of new words and cultural symbols, contrasting as well as interacting with the colonial worldview and its symbolic representations; Gerd Baumann’s (1996) similar,

but much more complex study on how ethnic communities in London build up identity discursively; and Dominic Bryan's (2000) book on a political ritual peculiar to Ireland, the orange parades, which contribute to reproduce symbolic borders between Protestant and Catholic communities.

In respect to classification/distinction in the Ravnsborg case, the locals generally expressed a negative attitude towards newcomers from the island of Zealand – by locals simply termed 'The Copenhageners' (even if they were not), and all speaking a Copenhagen dialect (even if they did not). Indeed a good example of a reality influenced by classification, closely linked to what Bourdieu (1990: 134; 1977: 178) also labels "constitutive naming" and "theorization effect". But also the other way round: a classification *embedded in reality*, not to forget to mention. Locals emphasized that the newcomers do not contribute but only receive money from the municipality. Several locals even used the word 'sponge' for this type of social clients. The standard answers when asking locals to describe the newcomers (Copenhageners) were: "*I do not have anything positive to say about them*", "*They do not want to work*", "*They are alcoholics*", "*They are on drugs*", "*They do not take care of their children*", "*They talk too much and too fast*", "*They are naive*", "*They hide in the fields*", "*They do not contribute*", "*They only show up on the first of the month to collect their public support*", "*They have a claiming mentality*." Similar stereotypes existed among the newcomers, who systematically stated that "*The locals are self-sufficient*", "*The locals always know somebody who knows somebody*" and "*The locals are pure inbreeding*". It should be stressed that such statements were often made spontaneously, without my asking, often repeated during an interview and – not seldom – with a concluding softening addition that, most probably, they *are* exceptions from the rule.

When a person in such, or similar, terms had described the local-newcomer conflict, I put in the question "why is this so?" (or similar short questions), a typical and often repeated answer from representatives from both sides was that this was due to "*differences in mentality*" between the two groups. When asked to describe in detail how these differences reveal themselves in daily life, locals often mentioned differences in dialect and the speed of talking, the way of clothing, body signals (especially the newcomers' tattooing), keeping one's house and garden (e.g. 'decent people always have a kitchen garden' was a typical statement, which always put me in great wonder), and pets, e.g. many locals detest the newcomers' big dogs. *In particular*, locals get upset when Copenhageners deposit junk cars in their gardens. Observation and interpretation of such visible social markers has strong impact on worldviews and practices in Ravnsborg. For example, on the question 'who are the newcomers?' a 35 year old, local man answered:

"They are not working people most of them. They are a kind of social clients, you see. They turn up [at the municipal office] at the first in each month [to receive their social income] [LAUGHTER] (...) What I find most awful, that is when newcomers rent houses here. They don't care a *shit* about how things look like. And that's exactly what *bothers* me. They may drink fifty bottles of beer a day, I don't care the least about that. But – *goddamn!* – they don't have to spoil the whole building, which was beautiful until they arrived – now it's all lying in a mess with old

junk cars scattered... yes, all that shit that lies around the house. But it's something that disfigures [the whole municipality]."

Conversely, many in-migrated Copenhageners see the locals as suspicious, weirdly taciturn, authority accepting, ultra-conservative and extremely slowly thinking people – always lurking behind fences and bushes to watch them, the strangers, and who have all sorts of prejudices against them. For example, I was told by a 35 year old Copenhageners, who had lived in Ravnsborg since his early childhood, without however identifying himself as a local, nor feeling accepted by the Ravnsborg citizens:

"Walking with your dog along the fields. That's not allowed. No! Definitely not! And you must have a decent kitchen garden. You must wear decent clothes. You must... Well, and then one doesn't walk around in his garden only wearing pants, you don't do that either. Definitely not. That's also wrong. And then, if you have reptiles [snakes]: O lord! That... it's all like that".

Similarly, an unemployed Zeelander in his late thirties felt stigmatized, as long as he did not to get to know the local people personally: "The Copenhageners are seen as social clients, drug addicts and alcoholics. That's the way it is". Asking interviewees about the historical roots of the conflict between 'Copenhageners' and Ravnsborg residents, they all – grossly speaking – referred to an old conflict between agrarian minded islanders, who still possess an old agricultural mentality and feel inferior to smart urban dwellers, and urban minded Copenhageners, who slightly disdain all the 'clods' outside the Copenhagen region.

During the last 10-20 years, conflicts have escalated, reinforced by negative stories about the Copenhageners in local and regional medias, as well as orally transmitted rumors about the Copenhageners, many of them counter-factual. Just to mention a couple, 'all people drinking alcohol in public space are Copenhageners', or a story about a Copenhageners, who – it is said – threw away his crutches and played football all day long the moment *after* he formally had been granted (lifelong) early retirement pension because of bad health. The story showed to be one big misunderstanding, but it surely reveals a general feeling among locals of being cheated by free-riding and morally degraded Copenhageners in a zero-sum game.

I will now present a social capital framework and thereafter apply it on the Ravnsborg case.

4. Social capital

Social capital: A pathway to a 'Bourdieuian economics'?

In recent years, the concept of social capital has been widely applied within cross-disciplinary human science research. Social capital can be broadly defined as co-operative networks based on regular, personal contact and trust. Social capital benefits the individual actor as well as it – presumably as an unintended by-product (Putnam 1993a: 170; Coleman 1990; Herreros 2004: 23ff.) – benefits society as a whole, by

fostering generalized trust and thusly ‘lubricating’ civic life (Putnam 1993b: 37). In this way collective goods are voluntarily provided for, such as common norms, predictability in human exchanges, rapid spread of information, the rise of useful civic associations and, as a consequence, less state monitoring. In this way, at *macro* levels, social capital is supposed to reduce transaction costs and enhance economic growth and should therefore be valued on the same footing as more traditional capitals such as physical, economic and human capital (Coleman 1990; Svendsen and Svendsen 2003). At *micro* levels, the single individual profits from networking by being allowed access to two goods: important information and (reciprocally exchanged) services, that is, favors (Herreros 2004: 17). In sum, a social capital approach is relevant on both micro and macro levels, thus inviting to truly cross-disciplinary research within a theoretical framework covering *all* levels.

Another reason for the increasing success of the concept is that it has shown to be a fruitful mediator between economics and other disciplines (e.g. Coleman 1990, 1994). Such scope is in line with the increasing number of interdisciplinary studies within public and economic anthropology – studies that confirm that anthropologists these years are broadening their perspectives, implying an intensified interest in urgent, on-going public debates (see e.g. Behar 1996).³ Thus, in perspective, social capital studies may succeed in linking disciplines ranging from economics, sociology, history and anthropology. Even more interesting, maybe, they might form a pathway towards a new socio-economics that aims to dissolve a highly artificial border between economic and non-economic fields of study. (For reviews, see e.g. Portes 1998; Woolcock 1998; Dasgupta and Serageldin 2000; Sobel 2002; Svendsen and Svendsen 2004). Such a new science Bourdieu (1979a, b, 1986) envisioned around 1980. Thus, in an important article from 1986, “The forms of Capital”, Bourdieu presents an original hypothesis of the existence of material as well as non-material forms of interchangeable capital within specific fields (economic, political, juridical, artistic, religious, scientific). In the article, he defines four forms of capital: Economic, cultural, symbolic and social. However, *overall* his collected works indicate that the number of capitals – like the number of fields – is in principle unlimited. Thus, in his works we find forms of capital ranging from economic, cultural, technological, juridical, organizational, commercial, symbolic to social (e.g. Bourdieu 1979a, b, 1986, 1997, 2000). *Social* capital Bourdieu defines as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986: 248) – that is, primarily a concrete resource belonging to the single individual (just like money, commodities, knowledge and cultural background). Furthermore, social and other capitals should be integrated in what Bourdieu terms “a general science of the economy of practices”, i.e. a science revealing capital “in all its forms and not only in the one form which is recognized by economic theory” (Bourdieu 1986: 242). This should be done by grasping “capital and profit in all their forms and to establish the laws whereby the different types of capital (...) change into one another (op.cit.: 243) (for further details, see also Svendsen and Svendsen 2003: 616ff.).

Considering Bourdieu's many contributions to cross-disciplinary neo-capital studies, all based on an "integrated vision of social and economic factors of practices" (Lebaron 2003: 555, see e.g. also Bourdieu 1980, 2000), I would suggest to rename A general science 'Bourdieuian economics', or simply *Bourdieuconomics* (Svendsen and Svendsen 2003, 2004, 2004a). That is, a human science that annulates the division between economic and non-economic areas; which seeks to cover *all* neo-capital studies; and which focuses on how capitals accumulate and are converted into each other at all levels, *including* seemingly 'disinterested' and 'non-economic' fields such as art (Bourdieu 1980). In this perspective, social capital studies should primarily be seen as the first step towards a neo-capital theory, or science, Bourdieuconomics. Furthermore, within social capital studies I see bridging/bonding as the most promising approach to what seems to be not only a visible and invisible, but also *indivisible* totality of socioeconomic human practices.

Bridging/bonding and inter-group conflicts

In respect to understanding social conflicts like those in Ravnsborg, there are many sources of inspiration – both within and outside the social capital literature. Not least, important theoretical and empirical findings appear within recent anthropological studies of civic society (e.g. Warren 2001; Krishna 2002; Giri 2002) and intra-group violence (e.g. Kapferer 1988; Tambiah 1996; Varshney 2002), and within an immigrant sociology focusing on inclusion/exclusion strategies (e.g. Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1994; Portes 1998).

Among the few qualitative contributions to the social capital literature is Krishna's (2002) book on *Active Social Capital*, based on case studies from India. He finds a clear linkage between community development and economic growth, and levels of social capital. Thus, social capital in the form of trust and solidarity within a local community (that is, prevalently bonding in my terminology) should be seen as a potential resource, which can however only be productive through agency in the form of competent leaders, who are able to bridge between local and supra-local groups. Similarly, Warren (2001) describes the building of social capital of an inclusive nature, using the case of the American Industrial Areas Foundation. He stresses the importance of organizational forms in civic society, designed to foster trust, cooperation and, ultimately, leading to political influence. In his analysis of violence between Hindus and Muslims in India, Varshney (2002) does not apply a social capital terminology but his scope is very similar to the bridging/bonding approach. He reaches the interesting conclusion that regular, interethnic face-to-face contact between Hindus and Muslims in the local associational life is the best guarantor for mutual trust, dialogue and peace, while one-sided intra-ethnic engagement increases risks of evil rumors, symbolic violence and, ultimately, people killing each other. In this way, and in contrast to a much less dramatic rural Denmark case, *excessive* bonding social capital in India simply becomes life-threatening, leading to more or less arbitrary killings – just like members of terrorist cells killing arbitrary citizens in New York, Madrid and, now also (July 2005), London.

Within sociological migration studies, Hammar et al. (1997), Massey (1998) and Schiff (1998) see social capital as a good, which influences migration patterns at macro levels. They do however not distinguish between qualities of social capital (bridging/bonding) in the analysis. In most micro studies social capital is seen as belonging exclusively to a specific immigrant group and used ‘against’ the surrounding society, that is, prevailingly *bonding* social capital based on particularized trust. As states Granovetter (1995), it is the level of group solidarity that gives immigrants and other minorities advantages in the construction of enterprise. In a similar vein, the work of James Coleman – who more than any has promoted the concept of social capital among economists and sociologists – stress the importance of common, intra-group norms and network closures in building social capital. This plus side of normative behavior has Coleman e.g. sought to document in a comparison of drop-out pupils in Catholic and non-Catholic schools in the United States (Coleman and Hoffer 1987; Coleman 1988a; Svendsen and Svendsen 2003: 619-20). In this way, Coleman directs a highly sociological focus on social capital as reciprocal obligations and expectations between people, that is, reciprocity, as well as on the norms and sanctions which ensure these relations (Coleman 1988a).

Portes (1998, 2000) uses immigrant studies to show that social capital also has a negative side. Moreover, that negative and positive types of social capital can exist simultaneously in a society and even as two qualities within *the same network* (1998: 20). Thus, strongly inspired by Bourdieu Portes defines social capital as both an actual, immediately capitalizable and potential resource available for individuals – with the important addition that this form of capital *can ‘cut’ both ways*:

At the individual level, the processes alluded to by the concept [of social capital] cut both ways. Social ties can bring about greater control over wayward behavior and provide privileged access to resources; they can also restrict individual freedoms, and bar outsiders from gaining access to the same resources through particularistic preferences [op.cit.: 21].

Portes (1998: 10) identifies positive social capital with processes of ‘rule enforcement’, ‘bounded solidarity’ and ‘enforceable trust’, that is, bonding social capital based on specific trust, but with *positive* externalities – much in line with Coleman’s idea of closure. E.g., he refers to the Vietnamese community in New Orleans, where everyone keeps an eye on one another, preventing a child being truanting from school, joining a street gang, etc. (ibid.). In other words, they prevent immigrants from falling out with the wider society – a form of bridging. Another example of beneficial (not excessive) bonding social capital is the Asiatic immigrant mothers in the United States, who not only remain at home with their children but also procure school textbooks in order to help their children with their homework (op.cit.: 11). Portes also gives examples of negative social capital, for example black urban neighborhoods, where industry and white middle-class families “have left the remaining population bereft of social capital, a situation leading to its extremely high levels of unemployment and welfare dependency” (Portes 1998: 14). The monitoring, which takes place in such

communities, and which results in a binding and forced solidarity, has the positive function of social control. However, it may also have a negative effect on the individual in so far as it limits freedom of action, as well as on society as a whole (for more details, see Svendsen and Svendsen 2003: 622-24).

Social capital mixes

In contrast to Bourdieu, Coleman and Portes, Putnam relates social capital to generalized trust and applies it to macro level studies, which are highly concerned with the relation between levels of trust and voluntary network cooperation and a society's political and economic performance. Following Putnam (2000), *bridging* forms of social capital tend to ease contact and trust between strangers in a society, making third party involvement (e.g. state, lawyers) superfluous and thus lowering transaction costs. Here one may mention the excellent cases of the Nordic welfare states, which have the highest scores in the World Value Surveys, both concerning number of memberships of associations, citizen's perception of the level of governmental corruption and levels of generalized trust, i.e. percentage of population answering yes to the question "can most people can be trusted?" (e.g. Herreros 2004: 79ff.; Nannestad, Svendsen and Svendsen 2005). In contrast, too much *bonding* social capital enforces distance between people and, consequently, acts as a "superglue" increasing *distrust* and, thusly, transaction costs. An example of loss of social capital can be seen in the decline of associational life in the United States from the end of the 1960s until the present (Putnam 1996, 2000). This erosion of a the great reserve of social capital created in connection with the civil rights movements of the 1960s is the main theme of *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000), which also tries to trace a 'downside' of social capital. For example, Putnam says, bonding social capital and distrust tend to arise between different ethnic groups. Another extreme example is the case of Italy, where bonding social capital is thriving among mafia groups in the South, resulting in nepotism and corruption, whereas strong civil traditions and bridging social capital are prevailing in the North (Putnam 1993a).

Thus, taking both macro and micro level findings into account we may hypothesize that counter-productive *bonding* social capital throws a spanner in the works, if not outweighed by a continuous revitalization – and reorganization – of existing stocks of productive *bridging* social capital. In practice, the 'dark side' of social capital may be seen as outcomes of what social scientists have termed 'anomaly', 'fragmented societies' (Mingione 1991), 'social traps' (Rothstein 2005), 'social dramas', and the like. Often mentioned examples are Al Qaida, Hells Angels, the KKK and the Italian mafia. Apart from such *excessive* bonding social capital (Svendsen and Svendsen 2004: 2), which – as indicated by mainly macro level research – like a cancer destroys common goods such as generalized trust in society, the bonding type of social capital – as indicated by mainly anthropological and sociological research – should be recognized as *just* as beneficial as the bridging type (op.cit.: 3). Thus, bonding social capital also includes small, exclusive but nevertheless highly beneficial kinship groups and close friendships, which function as important social and economic safeguards for the single individual. This is illustrated in Figure 1. Results from multi-level social

capital research therefore seems to suggest that, overall, governmental policies should be designed to foster both particularized trust (in private spheres) and generalized trust (in public spheres) in order to promote a *harmonious social capital mix* (Svendsen and Svendsen 2004; Herreros 2004).

[Figure 1 here]

In my view, Putnam's line of thought is *not at all* irrelevant to micro level (fieldwork) studies. On the contrary, macro level performance, including institutional performance, ought to be described, analyzed and explained in its very *genesis*, that is, in concrete processes of social capital building highlighted in case studies within specific time/space contexts. Such case studies – I claim – can offer much more realistic, much more empirically grounded, multi-faceted, sophisticated and practicable policy recommendations than grandiose Putnamian surveys ever can, or could. That is, however, *if* findings among economists and political scientists (for example the role of social trust for economies) *are combined* with sociological and anthropological findings (for example the role of intra- and inter-group norms and classifications).

Take the case of Ravnsborg. As we soon shall see, we here find two dominant tendencies at the moment, namely, on one hand, the creation of distrust and bonding social capital and, on the other hand and to a lesser extent, the creation of extensive trust and bridging social capital. Arguably, both types of trust build on personal contact and trust. In contrast to statistics and questionnaire surveys, deep-going interviews here have the possibility to reveal the very *anatomy* of a bridging social capital based on personal closeness and contact to people across all group barriers (outwards, in an open spiral), and a bonding social capital monopolised by a closed circle (inwards, in a closed spiral). That is, *how* these processes embedded in inter-group power relations, classifications, cultural identities and individual strategies take place, *why*, and what they *mean* to people. Furthermore, what they involve *socioeconomically*, in terms of what economists – so fascinated by 'markets' – call positive and negative externalities.

5. Bridging/bonding formation in Ravnsborg

Distance and symbolic violence

Overall, my survey shows that an erosion of social capital is presumably taking place in Ravnsborg Municipality. This caused by distance, both physical and mental. Thus, above all, it seems to be the *experienced distance* among citizens that weakens civil engagement. Entrepreneurs die out gradually because they neither seem to have a clear context to work in, or a common cause to work for. Closure and personal relationships have eroded. Instead, fragmentation, isolation and ignorance prevail. This is in line with Putnam's abovementioned American survey, which shows that the 'privatisation of leisure time' due to excessive TV watching and spent time in front of the computer

contribute in extending the physical and psychological distance between people (Putnam 1996: 47-48, 2000: 216).

The Ravensborg case shows that a consequence of distance is less contact between citizens and less caring about each other. Fewer neighbors and people living opposite recognize each other. Fewer greet each other in the street (or, maybe, they greet each other, but that's all). Fewer meet in the physical meeting places, for example, on the football ground, the choral society, parent-teacher meetings, town council meetings or the general meetings in the local house-owners' association etc. etc. By this, many common goods disappear that made life easier and more pleasant earlier on. For example, watching each others' kids or dogs, getting access to information from chatting with neighbors, looking after your neighbors' house during holidays, borrow a hedge cutter etc. Furthermore, the fieldwork displays that, when asking newcomers in Ravensborg whether they know their neighbors, he or she typically replied while pointing with the arm: *"The neighbors? Well, you can't see them from here, but they live 2 or 3 kilometers in that direction"*. Also, many locals whom I met by coincidence, often in the most desolate areas in the municipality, would say again and again, referring to the Copenhageners: If only *they* will leave *us* in peace I'd have no problems with them at all, or similar expressions. Even though, paradoxically, many of them had only seen or heard, but not actually spoken to any Copenhageners – partly due to lack of common meeting-places.

Thus we see that mere physical distance and lack of physical meeting places mean that newcomers and locals simply *do not get the chance* of getting to know each other, thereby losing potential advantages from co-operation. For example, newcomers might get into a 'firewood supply circle' belonging to a 'superglued' group of locals and could, in return, help in fixing the computers of farmers (and, the interviews revealed, such computer experts among the newcomers really exist). Who knows? For example, I asked a young and very isolated Copenhageners girl living on social incomes with her boyfriend in a rented house in very bad conditions: *"Where do the local people meet?"* *"Well, I don't really know"*, she answered reluctantly while staring at the desert like sugar beet fields outside the window. *"But I am sure they know each other, they ought to. So they must have a place to meet"*. *"Do you know them?"*. *"Noo.."* [silence]. *"But at least we **greet** each other..."* [quiet laughter].

Add to this symbolic violence in the form of stereotypes, spread orally as well as through the local and regional medias, and mainly derived from simply not meeting each other, not knowing each others identity at all – something that definitely works *against* bridging social capital. Basically, the absence of physical meeting places – or what I term 'platforms' for social capital – can lead to misunderstandings between the two groups, so that the isolated networks of newcomers versus locals have formed without the crucial inter-group contact – very similar to mechanisms described in the abovementioned case on Hindu-Muslim conflicts in India (Varshney 2002). Too much bonding social capital compared to the amount of bridging social capital is however economically irrational for the municipality, as the costs of lacking co-operation, or directly *opposing* each other, are – as we soon shall see – tremendous.

The costs of distrust

It is interesting to note that the Copenhageners without a job were fully aware that they were an economic burden for the municipality. Generally, they found this situation non-satisfactory themselves. Several newcomers used the word “trap” or “grey zone” about their own situation implying that it was hard to get a job or to take a new initiative in doing something. People feeling lonely and isolated and/or badly treated by the municipality have a tendency to work against ‘the system’ rather than to contribute actively. In short, they often end up in a social trap. *Combined* with lack of physical meeting places, i.e. ‘platforms’ apt to allow different groups to interact and get to know each other, not only the groups will fail to draw advantage from each other’s resources but – even more seriously – generalized distrust will imply that the citizens directly start working *against* each other. Here, Ravnsborg is an illustrative example of how conflicts and bonding social capital throw grit into the machinery involving – no killings, luckily – but serious socioeconomic costs.

It is not easy to calculate how much distrust costs a society or local community. However, the interviews overall demonstrate that significant human costs arise among newcomers from alienation, throwing suspicion on and total isolation. An illustrative example is a Copenhagen woman about 40 years old. For one year she had lived in the municipality with her husband and two children and recently had had a nervous breakdown. In a strange, moody way she told me in her quick, accentuated Copenhagen dialect about the reason why they felt isolated from the local people in the village – and thus, forced to seek company with other Zealanders, that is, ‘Copenhageners’:

R: “Down here, we feel alienated. We feel lonely. Incredible lonely. We have no contacts [to the local people] (..) People are... Well, they are quite nice, that’s not the problem. The problem is that they don’t really involve (..) Here [in the village] we can go for a walk with the dogs just as many times as we like, and there will not be a single person, who will ever stop us and talk to us”.

I: “Why?”

R: “Because we look the way we do. My husband, he has long hair and tattoos all over his body and... Well, then people automatically think he is a rocker [i.e., a member of Hells Angels]. But he is not. And has never been (..) People here quickly get suspicious and: “Huh, who are those folks, eh?” Everybody believes that you have come to their place with the only purpose of sucking out the system [i.e., get social incomes from the municipality]”

Clearly, as this specific case also documents, many doctor and psychologist visits, early pensioning, caseworks, children with social problems etc. could have been avoided if a newcomer had had a larger network including local people with strong resources. My interview with a doctor in the central hospital confirmed these suppositions. Furthermore, she told me that the increasing visits of newcomers from Zealand had resulted in a drastic change in medical care, from medical to psychosomatic treatment: “The strict medical treatments have become few, really few in numbers”.

Another example of costly distrust stemming from excessive bonding forms of social capital is the rapid growing number of neighbor conflicts within the last few years between locals and 'the Copenhageners'. The disputes typically concern trifling cases such as the exact localization of a carport or the exact height of an end wall. These disagreements that normally could have been settled by the parties themselves, now result in extensive and costly public casework. The pattern reflected in the interviews is that the Copenhageners and the islanders easily start a war whenever there is something to fight about (as little as it may be). Two neighbors will, rather than trying to co-operate, avoid each other and search for support from others of their own 'tribe members'. Such social cohesion within the group only means that the municipality all of a sudden receives more complaints from other neighbors as well. Therefore, the amount of expensive public and professional third part involvement steadily grows, for example the workload for the police, lawyers, doctors, the regional psychiatric center, court, the hence inspection team, municipal family therapists, as well as a range of municipal, regional and national public administration institutions (i.e. the case working section, primarily). A specific example of a neighbor conflict is a dispute over a carport that until August 2003 had lasted for over two years and had developed into definite chicane, involving laying an information against the one party and "the whole lot" (as it was formulated by the municipal employee). Officially, 46 case works had been registered so far at that time, and thousands of public working hours had been poured into this rather absurd dispute. Such "mud-throwing" is arguably initiated by what I named physical and mental distance above.

Formation of bridging social capital

The interviews also revealed the opposite tendency of bonding social capital, namely bridging social capital. The lubricator of bridging social capital and inclusive networks makes it possible to co-operate across groups. As the American sociologist James S. Coleman (1988a) puts it in his famous article "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital", it is not possible for a society to utilize a human capital (how big it may be) if the people carrying it do not communicate, i.e. in the Danish case, *if they never or only seldom meet*. A social capital is the prerequisite for transferring human capital such as knowledge, ideas, learning processes etc. This theory is valid not only in the relationship between child and parents but also between the two 'ethnic' groups of Copenhageners and Ravnsborg citizens.

As one of the locals laconically stated it in an interview, referring to the newcomers: *"You run the risk of missing a lot of expertise if you do not talk together."* Also, the red thread through the interviews is that both groups wish to get to know members of the other group better and benefit from it. Typical statements like the following indicate this: *"We could use those people [the newcomers]"*, *"Some of the newcomers are really active"*, or *"I think that the locals are most helpful"*. However, a general tendency was that newcomers were more interested in contacts with locals than the other way round. This due to the fact that the Copenhageners generally had much

smaller and much more temporary networks in the municipality, and only including other ‘Copenhageners’ – if networks *at all*.

Possible platforms for social interaction between the two groups are the more than 60 voluntary organizations in the municipality. These organizations are – and have been through the last one and a half century – the physical meeting places for different rural groups for solving practical matters or arranging cultural events. It is still so in Ravnsborg whether it is about football, lottery or amateur theatre. Especially the sports associations are important places for the integration of the Copenhageners as well as their children. Thus, a local *ildsjæl* (‘dedicated soul’) from the local handball club in Horslunde told me how he again and again had been surprised by the willingness of even ‘suspect’ looking Copenhageners to participate in the voluntary work of the club.

“Goddamn! Then you phone them [the Copenhageners] up and ask: “Do you want to keep guard at the Christmas party? [in the club]” or something else... be in the cloakroom and watch the clothes. Then they say: “I don’t want to be the bartender, because I don’t drink myself. I don’t want to be in company with drunken people and listen to all their babbling. I hate that.” But watching the clothes, that’s okay with them. Well, then you get a total different impression of these people – you think they are swamps, who ramble on the roads in their cars drinking beer all the time...”

So we see that, even though useful in many respects, the voluntary associations also become an ‘excuse’ for doing a common activity and in that way get to know each other. They provide a good opportunity for newcomers to become integrated and becoming one of those privileged who ‘knows someone that knows someone’. As mentioned earlier, when people know someone who knows someone who knows them again we have a *closure* (Coleman 1988b: 386). A closure takes place when practically everyone within a given area knows each other as well as each other’s children resulting in common norms, social control – a tool for swift action and a more secure environment.

The associational life seems the perfect platform for promoting closures and thereby integration, not just those for adults but also those for children thereby forcing the parents to meet at football or handball matches etc. Characteristically for all these places is that they ensure that newcomers and locals meet regularly face-to-face and get to know each other. In these places, everyone can contribute and the result is a societal benefiting, bridging social capital production. Thus, political decision-makers should be aware of the important policy implication of analyses, such as the one presented here, namely to help stimulating open physical meeting places as the future platforms for successful integration and economic growth. However, right now – and, as always, it may be added – they seem to be forgetting about the existence of an until now forgotten capital: invisible but highly valuable, relational assets in the form of *social* capital.

Integration and fragmentation

In sum, relations between newcomers and locals in Ravnsborg Municipality reflect both tendencies of on-going integration and fragmentation. Formation of bonding social

capital however seems to prevail, reproduced by socio-cultural differences. These differences are continuously being reconfirmed by discourses of exclusion and distrust, which cannot be fully verified by citizens, simply because a very large number of locals and newcomers do not know each other. To illustrate this, I have mapped intra- and inter-group relations among interviewees in a highly schematic form.

[Figure 2 here]

Figure 2 illustrates the clear dominance of intra-group relations in Ravnsborg. Furthermore that if we look internally, among newcomers and locals, we find significantly more bridging/bonding among locals, where members across single networks – to a large extent – are inter-married, colleagues, have been classmates and/or belong to local kinship groups that have known each other for generations. In contrast, the group of Copenhageners appears loose and fragmentized. Their networks have typically been established more recently than locals' networks, and they appear much smaller, of a much more transient nature and also less resourceful. Here we also find very small, isolated networks (3-4 persons), as well as isolated couples and individuals, in the figure illustrated by the small circles to the right. Finally, I have put in the two most important bridges or 'corridors' between the two groups: local public employees (here in particular municipal officers), who are in regular contact with a significant number of Copenhageners; and voluntary associations such as sports clubs where people are expected to contribute, regardless of socio-cultural background.

6. Conclusion

In this article, I analyzed serious cultural clashes between urban newcomers on public incomes and traditional, agrarian minded locals in the Danish marginal municipality of Ravnsborg. As I see it, we are here provided with an interesting and illustrative case of the formation of exclusive social networks, monopolised by a group of people inwards, in a closed spiral, and here termed *bonding* social capital. At the same time, and to a much lesser extent, we also witnessed a production of *bridging* social capital. This type is prevalently based on personal closeness and contact to people *across* group barriers, that is, outwards and in an open spiral. As such, Ravnsborg is an illustrative and very concrete case of formation of generalized distrust and ultimately a 'social trap', mirrored in prejudices, symbolic violence, group isolation, nepotism, superglue and lack of co-operation – if not a sheer *counteracting* the other party. The stock of bridging social capital, which also is being built, primarily in the many voluntary associations, is seemingly *not* able to outweigh the social and economic burdens stemming from excessively bonded networks.

Wishing to contribute to a scarce literature on qualitative social capital studies, I applied the theory of social capital at micro level and *in situ*, implying a time-space specific context. Hence I tried to understand how real living people build various types

of social capital, by use of deep-going interviews. This took place within a new cross-disciplinary, neo-capital theoretical framework, or science, which I introduced as Bourdieusian economics, or simply 'Bourdieuconomics'.

I argued that such a case study at the micro level has general implications for a cultural clash between two different groups (i.e. urban newcomers versus agrarian thinking locals) by demonstrating the complexity of a social capital mix where bonding social capital strongly prevails, ultimately leading to serious social and economic costs among a population. Thus, overall, the interviews showed that significant human costs arise among newcomers from alienation and isolation, mainly as a result of physical as well as psychological distance to native 'superglued' groups. Such patterns of bonding social capital were clearly reinforced by prejudices and symbolic violence towards the 'Copenhageners'. Several of the most 'militant' locals confided to me that if the Copenhageners only would let *them*, the locals, in peace, then there would be no problems except for increased municipal expenses to social incomes. However, my study indicated that this is not quite true – lack of integration is much more expensive. Thus, the economic losses of bonding social capital could be measured in many other ways, for example, a drastic increase in doctor and psychologist visits, early pensioning, public caseworks, children with social problems, fights between neighboring Copenhageners and locals, etc., all of which Ravensborg citizens have to pay with tax money. Thus we see that widespread distrust in a community certainly costs, in all respects.

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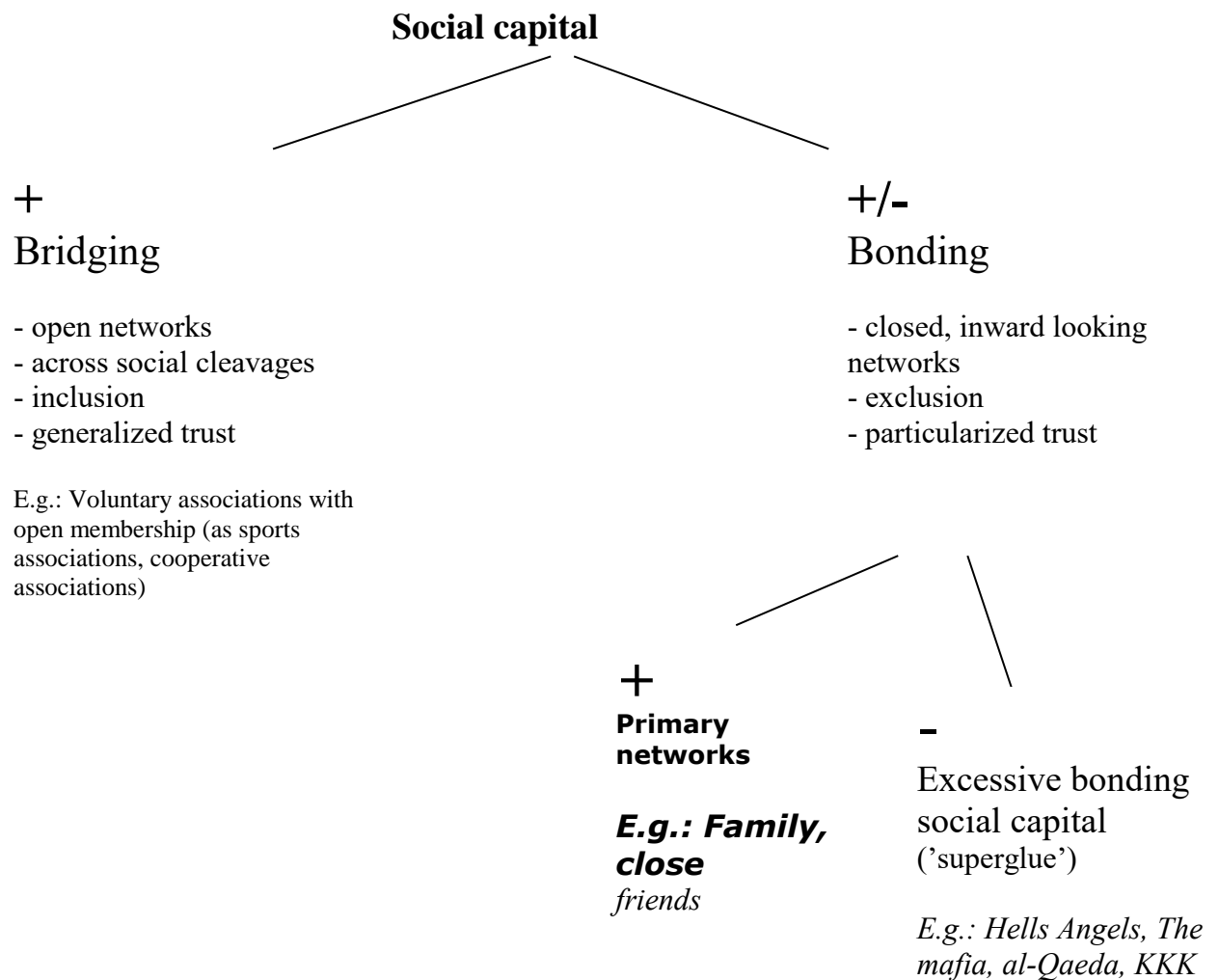
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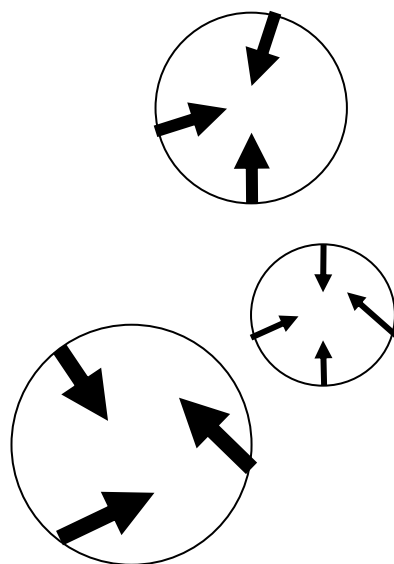
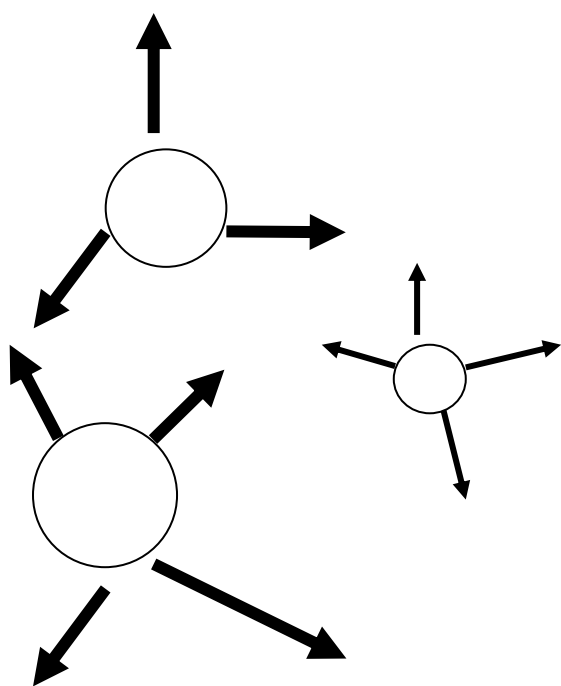
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Figure 1. Bridging and bonding social capital

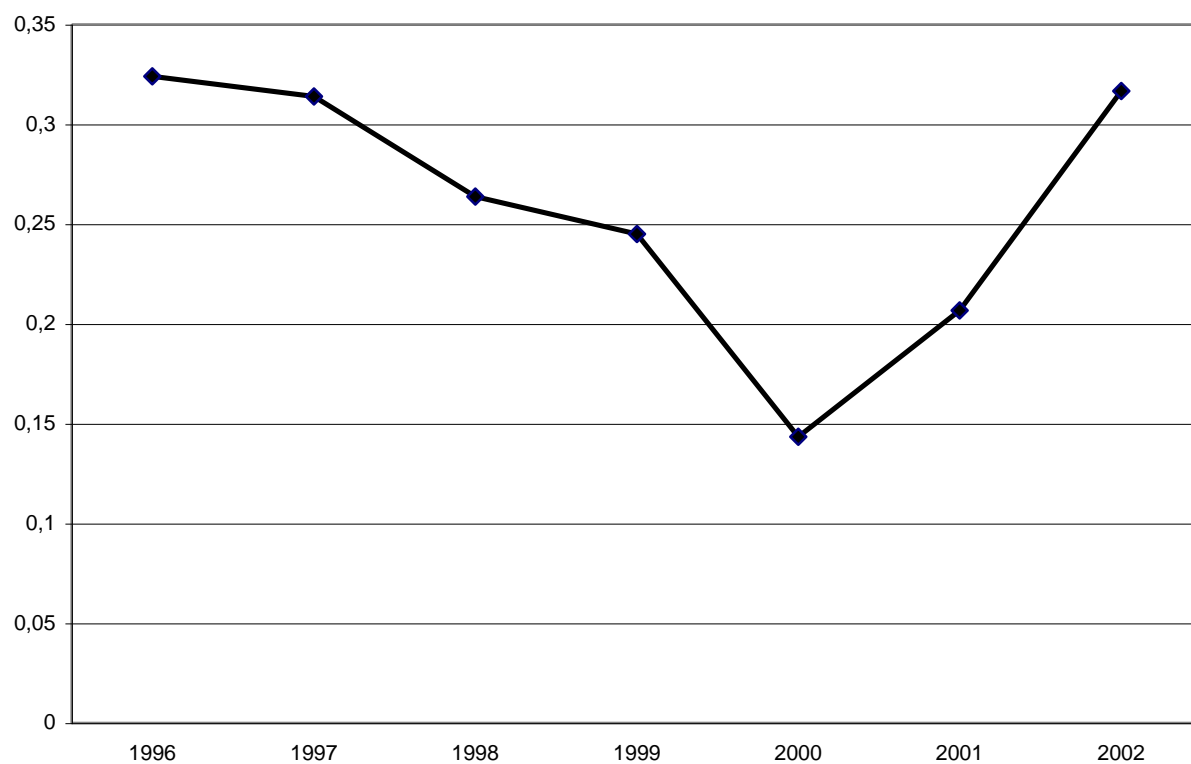




Appendix 1: Seven target subjects for embedded interview questions.

1. **Background:** Why do the newcomers move to Ravnsborg Municipality? What have they been doing before? What expectations did the newcomers have about the countryside and have these expectations been fulfilled?
2. **Networks:** What social networks did the newcomers have before they moved? What networks do they have now? How do they use their networks? What strategies do they have for building networks?
3. **The first month:** Explain how you experienced the first month in Ravnsborg?
(Asked to newcomers only)
4. **Newcomers versus locals:** Do you have contacts to your neighbours and do you help each other (newcomers only). How do you see the newcomers/the locals? Are there any differences in mentality? If yes, then how?
5. **The role of the municipality:** What is the relationship between Ravnsborg Municipality and the newcomers? How do you experience the municipality (newcomers only)? What are the resources of newcomers? What could have been done better?
6. **Associational life:** Do the newcomers participate in the associational life? Do they participate in any other activities where they meet the locals?
7. **The future:** How can the newcomers contribute economically and socially? Do you want to stay in the municipality and what are your future plans (newcomers only)?

Appendix 2: Percentage of in-migrants on public incomes out of the total number of in-migrants, Ravensborg Municipality, 1996-2002.



Source: Ravensborg Municipality

Notes

¹ “A multitude of significant nonthreatening questions can elicit the information the fieldworker seeks and create many golden moments in which to ask questions naturally, as part of the general flow of conversation. Planning and executing properly placed questions, while maintaining a flexible format, is the essence of good ethnography, ensuring the quality of the data and maintaining the participant’s right to privacy” (Fetterman 1989: 50).

² Concerning problems and advantages linked to interactive interviewing, see e.g. Davies (1999: 99).

³ For example, in a recent commentary, Robert Borofsky (2003) suggests that a public anthropology should seek to maintain “anthropology’s commitment to being an ethnographic witness”, while at the same time affirming a “commitment to reframing the terms of public debate”, i.e., “transforming received, accepted understandings of social issues with new insights, new framings”.